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000 credited, owing, no doubt, to the advance of Christianity and education.

CEREMONIES AND CUSTOMS ATTENDING BIRTH AND NAMING OF CHILDREN.

844 The Khasi birth ceremonies and customs are as follows:—
[784] When a child is born the umbilical cord is cut by a sharp
782 splinter of bamboo; no knife can be used on this occasion. The Mundas of Chota Nagpur similarly taboo a metal instrument for this purpose. The child is then bathed in hot water from a red earthen pot. The placenta is carefully preserved in an earthen vessel in the house till after the naming ceremony has taken place. When the umbilical cord, after being tied, falls off, a puja is performed with eggs to certain water deities (*ka blei sam-um* and *ka niangriang*),* also to a forest spirit
553 (*u'suid bri* or *u'suid khláw*). The naming ceremony of the child
386 is performed the next morning after the birth. Certain females are invited to come and pound rice in a mortar into flour. The flour when ready is placed on a bamboo winnower (*u prah*). Fermented rice is mixed with water and is placed in a gourd. Some powdered turmeric is also provided, and is kept ready in a plantain leaf, also five pieces of *'kha piah*, or dried fish. The earthen pot containing the placenta is then placed in the *nonggei*, or centre room of the house. If the child is a male, they place near him a bow and three arrows (the implements of a Khasi warrior); if a female, a *da* and *u star*, or cane
553 head-strap for carrying burdens. An elderly man, who knows
782 how to perform the naming puja, which is called by the Khasis "*kaba jer khun*," places a plantain-leaf on the floor and sprinkles some water on it. He takes the gourd in his hand and calls a god to witness. The people assembled then mention a number of names for the child, and ask the man who is performing the puja to repeat them. This he does, and at the same time pours a little liquor from the gourd on to the ground. As he goes on pouring, the liquor by degrees becomes exhausted, and finally only a few drops remain. The name at the repeat-

* A spirit which is supposed to have the power of causing a disease of the navel of a child.

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ing of which the last drop of liquor remains adhering to the spout of the gourd is the name selected for the child. Then the puja performer invokes the god to grant good luck to the child. The father takes the pot containing the placenta, after having previously placed rice flour and fermented rice therein, and waves it three times over the child, and then walks out with it through the main entrance of the house and hangs up the pot to a tree outside the village. When he returns from this duty, before he re-enters the house, another throws water over the father's feet. The father, being thus cleansed, enters, and holds the rice flour to his mouth three times. Two people then, holding the dried fish by their two ends, break them in two. The powdered turmeric mixed with rice flour and water is applied to the right foot of the father, the mother and the child receiving the same treatment. The friends and relations are then anointed, the turmeric being applied, however, to their left feet. The bow, arrows, *da*, and *u star* are carefully placed inside the inner surface of the thatch on the roof, and the ceremony is over. Rice flour is then distributed to all who are present, and the male adults are given liquor to drink. After two or three months the ears of the child are bored and ear-rings are inserted. These ear-rings are called *ki shashkor iawbei* (i.e. the ear-rings of the great-grandmother). Mr. Jenkins mentions that the naming ceremony amongst the Syntengs is performed by the "eldest aunt," presumably on the mother's side. A basket of eggs is placed in the centre of the room, and before the ceremony begins one egg has to be broken. Then the aunt of the child takes two sticks, and, raising them to her shoulder, lets them fall to the ground. Before they fall she shouts, "What name do you give the child?" The name is mentioned, and if, on falling upon the ground, one stick crosses the other, it is a proof that the name has won the approval of the spirit. If the sticks do not fall in this position, another egg is broken and another name is chosen, and the sticks are dropped as before until they fall in the required position, when it is understood by the performers that the name is a good one. Mr. Jenkins was informed by a young man "who had renounced heathenism" that some of the more cunning women cross the sticks before lifting them, and that

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553 when they do this they invariably fall crossed to the ground. "They thus save their eggs, save time and trouble, get the 553 name they desire for the child. . . ." It is noteworthy that 844 the Khasis consider it necessary to preserve the placenta until the ceremony of naming the child is over, and that the pot containing the placenta is waved over the head of the child before it is removed and hung up in a tree.

844 Dr. Fraser, at page 53 *et seq.* of the "Golden Bough," when 171 dealing with the subject of sympathetic magic, refers to the navel string and the placenta as parts which are commonly believed amongst certain people to remain in sympathetic union with the body after the physical connection has been severed, and it is interesting to note that in the Babar Archipelago, between New Guinea and Celebes, the placenta is mixed with ashes and put in a small basket, which seven women, each of them armed with a sword, hang up on a tree of a peculiar kind (*citrus hystrix*). The women carry the swords for the purpose of frightening the evil spirits, otherwise the latter might get hold of the placenta and make the child sick. Mr. C. M. Pleyte, Lecturer on Indonesian Ethnology, at the Gymnasium Willem III. at Batavia, who has most courteously furnished me with some interesting information on this subject, states that it is especially in the Southern Moluccas that the placenta is mixed with ashes and hung in a tree. Wider spread is the custom of placing the after-birth on a small bamboo raft in a river "in order that it may be caught by crocodiles, incarnations of the ancestors, who will guard it till the person to whom it has belonged dies. Then the soul of the placenta is once more united with that of the dead man, and together they go to the realms of the dead. During lifetime the connection between men and their placentas is never withdrawn." The Khasis, although they cannot explain the meaning of the presence of the placenta at the naming ceremony, and the care with which they remove it and hang it up in a tree, are probably really actuated by the same sentiments as the inhabitants of the Southern Moluccas, i.e. they believe that there is, as Dr. Frazer puts it, a sympathetic union with the body after the physical 546 connection with the child has been severed. There is no fixed 784 period of *sang*, or taboo, after a birth, but the parents of the

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582 marry any one belonging to your own *kur*, or clan. Unlike the
614 Khasis, however, a Lynngam can marry two sisters at a time.
595 The Lyngam marriages are arranged by *ksiangs*, or go-betweens,
584 much in the same way as Khasi marriages; but the ritual
582 observed is less elaborate, and shows a mixture of Khasi and Garo customs (see Section III.). The Lynngams intermarry
583 with the Garos. It appears that sometimes the parents of girls exact bride-money, and marriages by capture have been heard of. Both of these customs are more characteristic of the Bodo
847 tribes of the plains than of the Khasis. There are no special birth
782 customs, as with the Khasis, except that when the umbilical cord
553 falls a fowl is sacrificed, and the child is brought outside the house. Children are named without any special ceremony.
764 The death customs of the Lynngams have been described in Section III. A peculiar characteristic is the keeping of the dead body in the house for days, sometimes even for several months, before it is burnt. The putrefying corpse inside the house seems to cause these people no inconvenience, for whilst it remains there, they eat, carry on their ordinary avocations, and sleep there, regardless of what would be
771 considered by others an intolerable nuisance. The religion of these people consists of a mixture of ancestor-worship and the propitiation of the spirits of fell and fall, which are, most of them, believed to be of evil influence, as is the case with other savage
776 races. As with the people of Nongstoin, the primaeval
782 ancestress, "*ka Iaw bei*," is worshipped for the welfare of the clan, a sow being sacrificed to her, with a gourd of rice-beer, and leaves of the oak, or *dieng-sning* tree. The leaves of the oak are afterwards hung up inside the house, together with the jaw-bone of the pig. Sacrifices are offered to a forest demon, *U Bang-jang* (a god who brings illness), by the roadside; also to *Ka Miang Bylli U Majymma*, the god of cultivation, at seed time, on the path to the forest clearing where the seed is sown. Models of paddy store-houses, baskets and agricultural implements are made, sand being used to indicate the grain. These are placed by the roadside, the skulls of the sacrificial animals and the feathers of fowls being hung up on bamboos about the place
793 where the sacrifice has been performed. There are no priests or
796 *lyngdohs*, the fathers of the hamlet performing the various ceremonies.

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today, but await with patience the cause and the way! So much, is it not so! --

II. Religion in Various Aspects of Life.

●553 844 782 1. Giving a Name (tap lubri tap kyrteng). By tap lubri tap kyrteng one means the ceremony of the giving of a name to a child. In the section on sang I have already indicated the various taboos of a pregnant mother in regard to her husband.

At the birth of a child now, so the Khasi say, there are not as many ceremonies as at the death of a relative. For birth is anyhow in and of itself a feast of joy, since one is more joyful when a person enters life than when he departs from life.

[426] When a child is born, sacrifices are made on the next day (if it was born in the evening or in the night, on the following morning) and the ceremony of giving the name is performed. The sacrificer must be a relative of the child's. Among the Synteng, aunts of the child are called on by preference as executors of the sacrifice. The umbilical chord is cut off with a sharp-edged piece of bamboo and the child is bathed in warm water. The afterbirth (ka shynnai) is carefully kept in an earthern pot in the house (nongpei). Instruments are then placed at the child's side as symbols of later occupations, near a girl a knife (i wait) and a woven bamboo carrier (i star); but near a boy a bow (ka tyntieh) and three arrows (ki 'nam). The sacrificer fetches a little plate, on which he sprinkles rice meal and fills a gourd bottle (u klong) with rice brandy, which he previously mixes with water. He

553 844 782 arranges all this on a bamboo swing (u prah) and then begins the sacrifice with the following words:

Te ha sngew ko blei trai kynrad ko thaw-bynriew ko buhbynriew te ba long ka jer ba long ka thoh ban neh ka nam ban neh ka kyrteng ban long u lubri ban long ka kyrteng wei la suk la sngewbha phi ka blei ban khot da kata ka kyrteng to kein ba un long tymmen un long san un sain la ka kur la ka jaid un bad la ka khein ka bishar ha kpoh la iing mo.

Te sngew sa ka jong me u thawlang babha bamiat te wei ym don ka sang ka kyndiah te la long kynthei la long shynrang te a un long rangbah man rangbah yn sah ka nam yn sah ka kyrteng mo!

And so hear, o god and lord, o creator and maker of men! for now the name-giving and the noting-down shall occur, so that the fame may last and the name be kept, after it has pleased thee, o goddess, to name with this name. Now may it (the child) live to an old age and become great and strong in his descendants and races, and may he keep and observe the commands and justice of his family.

And so hear thou also, o thou good and beautiful Thaulang, since now for once no taboo and no difficultty exist and little woman and little man are (and a child was born), so may he become big and become a strong man and may the fame remain and the name remain preserved. Is it no so!

Meanwhile the sacrificer slowly sprinkles the brandy on the rice meal so that a dough is made. Now one seeks for the name of the child.

553 844 782 While he pronounces several names, he very slowly pours the rice liquor out on the ground. The name, then, that coincides with the drop that takes the longest to free itself from the neck of the gourd bottle, is given the child. When the name is found by this method, the sacrificer makes a mark on each foot of the child with the dough mentioned above, thus giving him the name.

553 844 [427] But if somebody comes into the hut by chance while the liquor is being poured out and says something, then a name formed from these words is given the child. Then the parents and relatives of the child must eat three times from this dough. When this is all over, the father takes the placenta, sprinkles rice meal on it and swings it three times over the head of the child. Thereupon he leaves the house and fastens the jar including the contents to a tree near the hut. Today this ceremony is seldom done exactly. Usually the father only goes in the yard and buries the placenta somewhere.

553 When the father returns, his feet are sprinkled with water ban khuid ban jhiah krat i khunlung, i.e. so that the child may stay healthy. A rice cake (u purew) which was prepared earlier is now eaten by everybody. Thereupon all the relatives sit down, the relatives of the wife on the left and the relatives of the husband on the right. A piece of the rice cake (purew) is dipped in water and the toes of all the guests are wiped with it. After the end of these ceremonies the utensils which were placed at the side of the child, the bow, the three arrows, the knife and the carrying straps, are taken away and carefully fastened to the inside of the roof of the hut.

● 553 Here are several examples of heathen Khasi names:

u Kisorai	ka Nobitri
u Rasmoni	ka Derisi
u Jaweng	ka Nimai
u Syer	ka Elimai
u Sniang	ka Korimai

The names with the article u are for the masculine sex, those with the article ka for the feminine sex.

The customs of the name giving are not the same everywhere. It is reported (23) that on

23. Gurdon, The Khasis, pp. 124-127.

such occasions a banana leaf with a pounded yellow root and five dried fish should be placed in readiness. An older man, who understands name giving (kaba jer khun), places a banana leaf on the ground and sprinkles it with water. He takes the gourd bottle in his hand and calls on god as a witness. The people gathered there then mention a lot of names, which the one offering the sacrifice must repeat. While he is saying the names, he pours rice brandy out of the gourd bottle onto the ground. The name that is said with the last drop from the gourd bottle is the name of the child.

"Or one lets two little bamboo sticks (igrä) fall to the ground. If these remain in the formation of a cross, the name that has been spoken meanwhile is the one kept. Otherwise this is done until the desired position of the sticks occurs. But this way takes a lot of time and trouble, since it is sometimes a long time before the little bamboo sticks lie in a crossed position. Mr. Jenkins reports

553 that a Khasi told him, [428] that all kinds of nuisance and deceptions occur with this method of name giving since one likes to save time and trouble."

"The dried fish are held by each end and cut into two pieces. Finally one wipes the yellow root that has been mixed with water on the right foot of the father, the mother, and the child."

844 782 553 Among the Synteng the following items are offered in sacrifice immediately after the birth of a child: some rice meal, eggs, roots and leaves. After the child is a month old (one often waits two months) the ceremony of the name giving is performed. This is done, if not by the sister of the mother, then by the oldest man of the sib. Sacrifices are brought again at this celebration, specifically two hens and a goat.

844 The parents of a newborn child are not allowed to cross a river, nor may they wash their clothes as long as the umbilical cord is not healed, since otherwise the mountain or river devil would harm the child.

845 Twins are considered a punishment, which has been incurred by somebody in the sib for violating a taboo. If the twins are of different sex, their bones may not later be placed in the common family grave.

782 755 2. Sacrifices during the Illness of a Member of the Family.

[783] Usually sacrifices are made only for internal illnesses. Because the Khasi cannot explain the origin of these illnesses, they are of the opinion that a devil has caused them. He must be angry with the person concerned

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connection of transaction of money (*khoimbei*) during the period, compulsory social participation in marriage, household worship, and funeral ritual, and the pride for the privilege in succession to *siem-ship* (chieftain ship) hold together the inner structure of the society in fulfilling its function.

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Family (Ka-iing)—The functions of family centre round the :

1. performance of basic religious rites,
2. property,
3. maintenance of social relations with the kin of *ka-Kjak* and *ka-bor*,
4. protection of familial kin.

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From the above discussions it may be inferred that the social groupings of the Khasis function in different dimensions and make the individuals aware of their duties and obligations towards each other. In the process of socialisation and enculturation of the individual they learn that the individuals, the different social groups and the community at large are inseparable.

Even from infancy a boy is infused with the idea that family comes first in regard, sub-clan second, and clan third. The kin of the family are primary relatives, and those of the sub-clan and the clan are secondary and tertiary respectively. One bow and three arrows given by a father to his son in his naming ceremony (*jewkhaw*) symbolise their relationships with the three social groups. With the first arrow man has to fight for *shi-iing* (members of the same family) and *shi-Kjak* (members of the same sub-clan), with the second for his *shi-bor* and with the third for the state.

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59; 71 *Hynniew Trep Hynniew Skor* (the seven seats, seven roots). These seven seats or roots were seven pairs of virgin women and men created by God to marry and they formed seven houses (families) and from them the country was filled and the rites and ceremonies were obtained. Thus the Khasi takes pride in the fact that God Himself delivered their religion and the rites and ceremonies unto them. ... The Khasi matrilineal system [illegible] idea of the union of one man with one woman. This is significant for those who consider that marriage is and has always been common to the whole human race, and it raises the question as to whether the Khasi idea is the survival of a period when the nature of paternity was not understood".

95 603 559 In the sacred rites of baptism of this simple folk we find that a Khasi grandmother will not officiate in the name-giving ceremony unless in the marriage of her son with the woman to whom the child is born there has been the regular ceremony of marriage.

household deities, and ancestor and smallpox deities. Deities of the first two categories are simply aspects of the high God or Creator. • The earth is peopled with two great orders of land demons and water demons who cause all undesirable, unnatural, and otherwise inexplicable events, acting either on their own or as instruments in the hands of sorcerers. Apart from omens, both in nature and in dreams, Khasis attach supernatural significance also to mystic numbers, and to the colors white, black, and red. They hold especially important folk beliefs regarding betel nut, paddy rice, gold and silver, and clothing. Practitioners. The two classes of religious practitioners are the village or state priests and the sacrificers. Both are male. They use the same divinatory techniques of reading broken eggshells and the entrails of cocks, and they both sacrifice cocks, hens, goats, pigs, and cattle. Their skills are not taught to them so much as picked up by observation and confirmed by demonstrations of efficacy. A priest is elected from among the men of his ab to direct his skills to [illegible] and come from the village or the state. A sacrificer acts for private persons or his groups, on call, and is rewarded by them personally with gifts in cash or in kind. The sacrificer is called upon to explain and then to ritually remedy every variety of misfortune, especially illness, though his powers are nowadays regarded with ambivalence, and he is widely expected to become a sorcerer sooner or later. • There are two major types of sorcerer. One is the ritual specialist or sacrificer who secretly turns his skills from good to evil, manipulating demons to injure a person or his group, and acting always for himself alone out of considerations of jealousy or revenge. The other is normally a leading citizen, a woman who is so wealthy and successful that it is believed that she must keep a shiw, i.e. a creature which will bring her prosperity as long as she feeds it periodically with human blood. To provide this blood, the men of her household, or other males whom she bewitches with a special whisky, will indiscriminately murder anyone except a member of her matrilineage. The families have an analogue to the shiw in their law, except that the ultimate result is death from illness rather than murder. Minor witchcraft can be perpetrated by possessors or persons with an evil eye, who are often women. Ceremonies. The important traditional ceremonies were the life-crisis rituals relating to pregnancy and childbirth, the naming of a child, and death. Lesser ceremonies related to marriage and divorce, and to housebuilding. All these rituals were addressed primarily to the ancestors, and they are still performed in modified form by many Khasis. Other rituals, which were performed by groups such as villages, clans, local descent groups, or households, were addressed to the ancestral aspects of the high

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21: Ehrenfels E-4,5 (1950) 1953 AR7 Khasi AR7

105 [175] [197] It will here be recalled that the Khasi are a matrilineal agricultural people, pre-litterate until the advent of the British in the sixth decade of the 19th century, organized under democratically ruling *siem*, or Khasi princes and chieftains and speaking an Austro-Asiatic language [14]. Their 144 physical affinities are unmistakably mongoloid and quite distinct from the Assamese speaking plains-Indians, — but not from the other mountaineers of Assam, Nepal and even Burmah or China, with whom they feel to be more closely related, as with the Indian plainspeople, as some of the tribal designations in the following lists of terms for Non-Khasi testifies (comp. No. 41 as against No. 42, 43 and 43/*a-e*).

114 122 In the collection of the material, I was hampered by my inability to pick up the Khasi language sufficiently quickly, for conversation without the help of an interpreter, but on the other hand greatly eased by generous and voluntary assistance on the part of several Khasi friends, especially U Ekiman Singh, the President, Unitarian Union, Khasi- and Jaintai Hills and his (Khasi) wife, Ka Austria [15], who offered me hospitality in their house at Maw Syn Jri, during my stay there. Dr. H. LYNGDOH, Shillong, the author of detailed accounts on Khasi religious ceremonial and institutions [16], U Jeeban Roy, a leading Pnár gentleman of Jowei in the Jaintia Hills, Ka Ellen Giri, Principal, Govt. Basic Education Training Centre, Malki, Shillong, Ka Kongwen, Shillong, and U David Roy, Prime Minister (retd.), and a number of hospitable Wár Khasi and Wár-Jaintia pan-leaf cultivators in the southern slopes of the Khasi- and Jaintia Hills, especially from the villages Mawlat and Padu, also helped me greatly in my task. My thanks are due to all of them.

101 114 The data, submitted and briefly described in this paper were thus collected in four different areas.

1. The South-eastern corner of the Khasi-Hills (plateau-area),
2. the southern slopes of the Khasi Hills, the "Wár-Khasi country" between the Khasi plateau proper and the northern boundary of East Pakistan,
3. the central plateau of the Jaintia Hills, round its capital market Jowei, and
4. the southern slopes of the Jaintia Hills, the "Wár-Jaintia country" between these and a section of the northern boundary of East Pakistan, further to the East than area 2.

197 Slightly different Khasi dialects are spoken in these four regions, Jaintia (Pnár or "Synteng") and Wár-Jaintia being more akin to each other, similarly as Plateau-Khasi and Wár-Khasi are.

101 125 The Pnár or Jaintias ("Synteng" is a slightly opprobious designation, used by the Plateau-Khasi for these, their eastern neighbours) look back

[14] SCHMIDT (1906).

[553] [15] So named, because Austria was much in the news at the time of her birth, during the first world war: — a fact which illustrates the Khasi peculiarity to use either ad hoc inventions as names for children, or to adopt such, from the Khasi point of view, outlandish words like: "Ka Austria" or "Ka Mediterranean Sea" as names for their children.

[16] LYNGDOH (1937).